

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 MANAGU 02423 261703Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02

SP-02 SS-15 BIB-01 HA-05 MCT-01 AID-05 PC-05

/071 W

-----127126 261712Z /43

O R 261550Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6684

INFO USICA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

UNCLAS MANAGUA 2423

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, SHUM, NU

SUBJECT: CENSORSHIP OF AND THREATS AGAINST THE PRESS

REF: A) MANAGUA 2087, B) MANAGUA 1922

SUMMARY: THE GON'S USE OF THE RADIO AND TV CODE TO CONTROL THE PRESS APPEARS TO HAVE ESCALATED TO A NEW LEVEL WITH THE TEMPORARY "PREVENTIVE CLOSING" OF FIVE RADIO STATIONS. AT THE SAME TIME, SEVERAL JOURNALISTS HAVE REPORTED THREATS OF PHYSICAL HARM AND AT LEAST ONE HAS SAID HE WAS ASSAULTED. END SUMMARY

1. DURING THE NIGHT OF 24 MAY, A POLICE JUDGE IN MANAGUA ORDERED THE "PREVENTIVE CLOSING" OF FIVE RADIO STATIONS. THE FIVE STATIONS ARE: RADIO CORPORACION, RADIO MI PREFERIDA, RADIO FUTURA, RADIO MUNDIAL, AND RADIO CATOLICA. ALL OF THESE STATIONS HAVE GIVEN PROBLEMS TO THE GOVERNMENT IN THE RECENT PAST (SEE REFTELS).

2. THE CLOSINGS WERE ORDERED PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 61 OF RADIO AND UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 MANAGU 02423 261703Z

TELEVISION CODE WHICH PERMITS PROVISIONAL CLOSING OF STATIONS FOR TRANSMITTING NEW OF "RIOTS" (MOTINES) AND "MOBS" (ASONADOS) WHICH COULD INCITE A "DISTURBANCE" (ROMPIMIENTO) OF THE PUBLIC ORDER. THE STATIONS WERE REPORTEDLY CLOSED FOR BROADCASTING NEWS OF DISTURBANCES IN ESTELI (SEPTEL). HOWEVER, IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER MORE THAN ONE OF THE STATIONS WAS BROADCASTING NEWS OF THE ESTELI RIOTING AND WHETHER THE REPORTING WAS DISTORTED.

3. EMBASSY HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT ON MORNING OF 25 MAY, COL. ALBERTO LUNA, DIRECTOR OF RADIO AND TELEVISION, AND ANTONIO MORA ROSTRAN, MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT, MET WITH THE OWNERS OF THE RADIO STATIONS. NO DETAILS ARE YET AVAILABLE BUT LUNA REPORTEDLY ADMITTED ERROR IN CLOSING THE STATIONS AND APOLOGIZED. HOWEVER, THE GON'S COMMUNIQUE ON THIS MEETING WAS A HARD-LINE STATEMENT OF READINESS TO ACT AGAINST STATIONS WHICH DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INCITE DISORDER AND VIOLENCE. ALL FIVE STATIONS RETURNED TO THE AIR THE NEXT MORNING.

4. LA PRENSA REPORTED IN ITS 24 MAY ISSUE - AS IT HAS PREVIOUSLY- THAT THREATS OF VIOLENCE HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BY IT AND RADIO STATIONS INCLUDING THE FIVE MENTIONED PARA ONE. ADDITIONALLY, EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED REPORTS THAT INDIVIDUAL JOURNALISTS HAVE RECEIVED ANONYMOUS PHONE THREATS. ONE REPORT STATES THAT A RADIO JOURNALIST WAS ASSAULTED AND HAD HIS NOTES AND TAPE RECORDER TAKEN WHEN HE WAS WALKING TO WORK. HE STATED HE DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE ARMED MEN WHO THREATENED HIM WITH BODILY HARM. ANOTHER REPORT ALLEGES THAT A SECOND JOURNALIST WAS THREATENED BY UNKNOWN ARMED ASSAILANTS.

5. COMMENT: THIS USE OF THE RADIO AND TELEVISION CODE APPEARS TO BE A HARSHER LINE IMPLEMENTED BY THE GON TO CONTROL MEDIA OPPOSITION. WE WILL CONTINUE TO ANALYZE THE APPLICATION BY THE GON OF THE CODE. THE REPORTS OF THREATS MADE TO AND ATTACKS UPON JOURNALISTS HAVE NOT YET BEEN SUBSTANTIATED, BUT, GIVEN THE CURRENT CLIMATE AND THE UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 MANAGU 02423 261703Z

EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW MONTHS, EMBASSY FEELS THAT REPORTS ARE PROBABLY CREDIBLE.
SOLAUN

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CENSORSHIP, THREATS, THE PRESS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MANAGU02423
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780223-0312
Format: TEL
From: MANAGUA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780515/aaaaalzh.tel
Line Count: 97
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e2dfb695-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MANAGUA 2087, 78 MANAGUA 1922
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2552292
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CENSORSHIP OF AND THREATS AGAINST THE PRESS
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, SHUM, SOPN, NU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e2dfb695-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014